

God's Covenant of Marriage

Pastor Joseph Clark – November 6, 2020

“When I have learned to love God better than my earthly dearest, I shall love my earthly dearest better than I do now.”

- C.S. Lewis

“Let the wife make the husband glad to come home, and let him make her sorry to see him leave.”

- Martin Luther

“A good marriage is the union of two good forgivers.”

- Ruth Bell Graham

A marriage is a life-long covenant. An agreement, a promise, which both the husband and wife warranty and guarantee. It is a covenant first and foremost between woman, man, and God with Jesus Christ as the mediator and advocate. And secondly, to one another. It is a partnership. Equal risk, equal investment, equal benefit. If you do not see it this way. Do not get married.

When the couple is generous to one another, they are generous to God. When they are faithful to one another, they are faithful to God. When they are giving of one another, they are giving to God. When they sin against one another, they are sinning against God.

Jesus first miracle took place at the wedding at Cana, in which he turned the water into wine. But why did he perform this miracle? Because his mother, Mary, asked him to. Not only that. She demonstrated her faith in Jesus by saying to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you to.” What miracle does our mothers ask of you today? Should you have a son and or daughter, what miracles will you ask of them when they get married?

The miracle of lifelong faithfulness? The miracle of lifelong dedication to the partnership? The miracle of conceiving and, lovingly and responsibly parenting a

life together? The miracle of life-long tolerance? Respect, and life-long acceptance of each other for who you are as individuals?

A couple must ask themselves what do they love about each other? Man and woman are a gift to each other from God himself. What should we do with a gift from God himself? We cherish it. We protect it. We treat it as sacred and priceless. Marriage is not easy, but, if you play your cards right and stay the course, you will earn one another. A wedding is an oath taken before a God. An oath, a pronouncement. A ceremony and the party. After which man and woman will have a life together. There will be vacations, and loving moments. Gifts, and encouragement. But there will also be bills, taxes, plumbing problems, disagreements with kid's teachers, and bad news from the mechanic, or life altering news from a doctor. And at the end of all the good times and the bad times, then and only then, will man and woman have earned one another. It is a partnership. It starts with friendship. Mutual respect. Selflessness, and loyalty.

But relying on one another will not be enough. For, we have nothing if you do not put your loyalty and faith in God first. We cannot do this on our own. We are too weak, too frail, too selfish, and too proud. Only through Christ can a couple truly enjoy the treasures of God's gift of marriage. If couples focus on supporting one another's walk with God, and as individuals they are living their faith, their marriage has nothing to fear. For couples who begin a marriage saying, "What can I get out of this? What am I getting out of this?" It is doomed. A marriage where both man and wife, guard and protect the marriage, the relationship, have each other's back, and who know God's word, wishes, and commandments about marriage, they are protected.

38% of marriages end in divorce. The average length of a marriage in Canada is 14 years. 41% of married Canadian's admitted to committing either physical or emotional infidelity. A contested divorce can cost anywhere from \$10,000 to \$100,000! The highest suicide rate among middle aged people are divorced middle aged people. Children of a divorced couple are two times more likely to have mental health disorders than children of couple who do not divorce.

The Holy Spirit tells us in the Word:

Therefore, a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

- Genesis 2:24

Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.

- Hebrew 13:4

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

- 2 Corinthians 13:4-7

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ...

-Ephesians 5:22-33

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, ...

- Ephesians 5:25-33

And the two shall become one flesh.' So, they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." And in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. And he said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

- Mark 10:8-12

What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.

-Mark 10:9

Married couples! Have each other's back. That includes family and friends. You are now each other's family. You are now each other's best friends. A marriage is not a finish line. It is the starting line. Now the work begins. You both grow as individuals and as a couple. A wise man once said. I married my wife because I loved her. And there have been times when I loved her because I married her. You are both going to go through individual challenges. Through it all you will have one- another and you will have God. Invite him into your marriage. Invite Jesus Christ into your marriage. Invite the Holy Spirit into your marriage. Accept him unconditionally. Bring love to one another. Bring peace to one another. Bring joy to one another. Be a pillar of strength for one another. Do not preoccupy yourself with what your family and friends want you to be. Do not preoccupy yourself with how marriage is portrayed on television or in the movies. Have a marriage that is pleasing to God. Be a super great couple. Have a super fantastic marriage. Have a wholesome, healthy, and inspirational marriage. One for the record books!

May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with your marriage. Evermore.

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